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In the Highlands

MRS. GEORGE ARCHIBALD PALMER



“Cove Homes” in the Southern Mountains

WOMAN'S HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Look Up to the Hills.

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help,” sang David; “My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.”

The earliest worship of the ancients was upon hills. The Jews built their temple on a mount. They had their “holy hill of Zion.” “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?”

They went “up into the temple to pray.” Their most sacred and patriotic and spiritual life was fostered by their relations to hill places. No wonder Bible imagery is full of beautiful references to hills.

All primitive people in times of stress have found refuge in hills. “He shall dwell on high : his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks.”

Who can think of the mountains of Switzerland and not remember William Tell? Or of the hills of Scotland without calling to mind Bruce and the Covenanters? History thrills with tales of patriot bands or single refugees, driven to the hills to gather strength that they might stand against their enemies. And many were driven to mountain fastnesses for conscience’ sake.

The influence on man of the everlasting hills cannot be estimated. Something of rugged courage, of endurance, power, resistance and patience must come to the mountaineer. And when, as in olden time, cities are set upon hills, where they cannot be hid, the mountain dwellers may share in the civilization of their age.

But living in loneliness, apart from his fellows, out of touch with the world and ignorant of its interests and progress, the man of the mountain drifts into fatal inaction, without aims or efforts beyond those demanded for his rudest needs. And his children, doomed to the narrow bounds of a scanty farm and to extreme poverty, repeat the hopeless story.

In the eastern part of the United States is a chain of mountains called the Appalachian system. It reaches from Maine to Alabama, with westward spurs into Missouri, and has many ranges. The White Mountains of New Hampshire belong to it. So do the Green Mountains of Vermont, the Adirondacks and Catskills of

New York, and the Alleghanies of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia.

East of the Alleghany Mountains in Pennsylvania another range begins and extends through Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas into Georgia. Members of this system on the eastern borders of Tennessee and Kentucky are called respectively Cumberland and Great Smoky Mountains. Other ranges variously named throughout the length of the system belong to it and the whole region is sometimes called "Appalachian America."

North of Maryland the people of this section share in the comforts and advantages of civilization. But farther south, especially in the Carolinas, Tennessee and Georgia, while there are many cities and villages of a high type, thousands are living in isolation and destitution, their nearest "neighbors" often many miles away.

These mountain homes are poor cabins usually having but one room—those of two rooms being sometimes called "double-barreled." One door and no window is the general rule. The door may look upon a bright, singing stream, great rocks, thick woods, a narrow, winding road, or no road except a stony mountain trail. But whatever the prospect, it holds few or no marks of man's cheerful exertion and nature's fair reward.

The interiors are even more depressing. The family eats, sleeps and sits in the one poorly-furnished room. A table of rough boards may stand against the wall, beside a clumsy, unpainted cupboard holding a few coarse dishes. Large beds with trundle beds under them may occupy the corners or ugly bunks be fastened to the walls. Two or three chairs, a bench and stools complete the outfit. There is nothing from which you would not turn with distaste except the fireplace. This, though unhandy for kitchen uses, lends a bright picturesqueness to the place and an air of antique homelikeness if a spinning wheel stands near.

There are no pictures, no ornaments, no books, magazines nor newspapers. If there were, probably no one could read them. Letters are not written nor received, and there is no other habit of communication with the world. Now and then a passing stranger may halt for a chat, an acquaintance may find time for a call of necessity or interest, or a preacher come riding on his horse to speak some word of cheer, sympathy and exhortation. When the preacher comes a prayer ascends from the lowly home—a home too often unused to prayer and soon forgetting its influence.

The clothing of these people is of the roughest, their daily

food poor and unwholesome. Their garments are homespun, formless and unbecoming. The women have no skill with the needle, nor as housekeepers and cooks. The usual meal is fried bacon, corn bread and rye coffee. A sort of "wheaten bread," so-called, but more like a boiled biscuit, served with apples boiled in the same pot, is thought an acceptable extra dish for company. Molasses is used on the bread.

The cabin door stands open summer and winter, except at night. This furnishes light by day. At night, without thought of ventilation, it is closed while the entire family sleep in the one room, defying every law of health from fresh air. Let us hope something of the poison in the confined air escapes up the chimney.



A Mountain Cabin.

Origin and Characteristics.

THE Southern Mountaineer, or Southern Highlander, is often called "poor white." This application of the term is a mistake; it belongs to an entirely different class—the shiftless, poverty-stricken white people of the lowlands, the class that constitutes the "slum-dwellers" in our cities, North as well as South. A term of contempt, at the best, it should be avoided by all who care for those less fortunate than themselves. Only the cruel or thoughtless speak of others in a way to belittle their manhood or womanhood. The term "cracker" applied to the people of certain sections (because, in their poverty, they depend largely upon cracked corn for food) is another heartless phrase.

Even in his poorest estate, something admirable is found in the mountaineer. Olive Thanet says, "He is hospitable as an Arab, brave, faithful and honest, and full of generosity and kindness." Unless suspected of being a spy, the stranger is welcomed to his cabin, and food is cheerfully offered with the cordial invitation, "Stand to, stranger, he'p yerself." At night the family will cheerfully sleep on the floor in order to give a bed to the guest.

Perhaps we can all find good descent if we go far enough back to look for it. At any rate the mountaineer has no reason to be ashamed of his origin. Probably he knows nothing much of himself, but the historian well knows how sturdy and honorable were his pioneer ancestors—such pioneers as, under favorable circumstances, founded our best American families.

Do you know the fascinating story of the Huguenots of France? The great Reformation was begun in that country about the same time as in Germany and was opposed with great severity. Many were burned as heretics and otherwise bitterly persecuted. For over a hundred years the unhappy Protestants had uncertain safety. Hundreds of thousands fled to friendly parts of Europe and to the American colonies, great numbers settling in the Carolinas. They were, Verplanck says, "the most moral, industrious and intelligent part of the French population." Many of the Southern mountaineers are of Huguenot descent.

The cabins, too, shelter families named MacDonald, MacRey-

nolds, MacNeil and other "Macs," descendants of the famous Scotch-Irish, who came to America some three hundred years ago. Our nation owes many of its greatest men to the Scotch-Irish, who are justly proud of their blood. Among the mountaineers are also found traces of German and English lineage.

Foolish as it is to overrate the value of descent, there should be proper satisfaction in it. St. Paul, a brother to all men, asserted his rights as a citizen "of no mean city"—as a man well born and reared.

But the best blood deteriorates in unhealthy conditions; if neglected the best natural gifts waste and die. This is why the shut-away mountain people in their worst estate are shiftless, sluggish, dispirited and degenerate, illiterate, and with little personal ambition.

However, their inheritance is not forever lost. Those working among them believe no work is more hopeful. They have keen intelligence and receptive minds once they are awakened. To rouse and stimulate them is the duty of the Christian church.

The Mountain Girl.

WHERE there are hardships, the lot of women is harder than that of men. One reason for this is the fact that the home duties of women are always more tedious, continuous and harassing than those of men. A man works out of doors and gets the benefit of air and light, or among companions where he finds interest in the association. The housekeeper is within walls which often confine more than they protect her. If she has little children her responsibility and tasks constantly increase. She must add to the comfort of her family by diminishing her own.

The fewer conveniences the heavier her toil, and the mother in a Southern cabin lacks the commonest handy helps of home-making. Having never used these things it is true she does not miss them, but she is to be pitied even more for this reason. For listless indifference to misfortune is the greatest misfortune of all.

Mountain girls, brought up in the ways of makeshift and careless unconcern, soon settle to the same habits, and when they marry—which is much too early—lead the same spiritless lives that have dwarfed the womanhood of their mothers. It has been so for generations and will so continue until the light of religion and education shines into these poor homes.

Think of one day in the life of a mountaineer's daughter. She wakes upon a rude bed, coarsely covered—shared perhaps with two or three sisters. From the lack of ventilation during the sleeping hours of the entire household, the air is foul and heavy. This is remedied, however, by opening the door for light.

The young girl does not enjoy the refinement of a separate basin, towel and comb. Her clothes have no additions of girlish ornament at neck or waist. She has never heard of "manicuring" nor practiced the art for her own improvement.

Her uninviting breakfast is served on a table that has no cloth and at which the family does not all sit. Some stand in or outside the door as they eat, some by the fireplace. When the meal is over she may help at the disorderly housework and "tote" wood and water. If she cooks the midday meal she will stir the corn pone, turn it into a three-legged skillet and cover with an iron lid. This she will set in the fireplace, raking hot coals beneath and over it. Or she may put the stirred meal cake on a board and set it in front of the fire for the baking. Both ways are familiar to the mountain cabin. She will boil the potatoes in the "kittle" hung on a crane and swung over the blaze, or roast them in the ashes.

If she is needed outside the house her father may set her the



A Mountain Girl

task of cutting grain with a sickle, hoeing corn, or even chopping wood. No wonder her hands are large and rough and her form early loses its youthful curves and takes on those that tell the tale of drudgery.

Little variety comes to the mountain girl's day. If necessity demands she rides away on the old horse to do an errand, going miles over a road washed by rains and never repaired, the horse's hoofs dislodging loose stones as he walks. Her riding habit is a long, faded calico skirt put on over her dress.

In berry time she picks berries on the steep hillsides in the hot sun. They sell for a pittance and furnish a table luxury at home. Occasionally a visit or a rude festivity may bring its change to her monotonous life. Otherwise the day here described is the ordinary

day of the mountain girl. She turns, when it is over, not to a clean, quiet bed in her own room, as happy girls ought to do. Her needed rest she can only get in the crowded, common room where beds and, it may be, the floor, are full of sleepers, the family dogs among them.

And without expectation of brighter dawns, she sleeps till the passing night brings her again to the humdrum day.

Tidings of Great Joy.

SEVERAL years after the Civil War, strange rumors began to creep up the hillsides and reach the ears of the cabin dwellers.

They were repeated at chance meetings on the road, or a passer-by paused to discuss them with an acquaintance across a clumsy fence. Families talked them over around the fire.

Rumor said that some women had come to the highlands and established one or two small schools for girls, entirely unlike any ever heard of before. The mountain schools in dismal school-houses were poorly taught by half educated teachers. A few pupils attended, but the dull sessions lasted no more than five, often only three months a year.

The new schools, though housed in humble quarters, were clean and inviting, gave a full school year of instruction and a home to the students at the same time. Not books alone were studied but sewing and housekeeping were taught.

The men were not greatly in favor of these novel schools. To their minds girls were mainly useful for what they could do indoors and out of doors. It "shore didn't need much book larnin'" to weed, to hoe and to "tote" various burdens, and there was only one way to cook bacon and pone, perhaps there were two for potatoes.

But the eyes of the young girls brightened, their faces took on a wistful wonder, and mothers began to feel a stir of sympathy with the vague hopes awakening in the hearts of the daughters. Here and there a home sent forth a girl to try the strange venture of the new school, the mother going with her to see her safely entered. To this day the mother usually accompanies the daughter on her journey.

The earlier applicants lived comparatively near the schools. As time passed and confidence grew they came from greater distances. One orphan girl and her grandmother walked two days, carrying a frugal lunch and sleeping over night in the woods. The grandmother toiled back alone. A mother with a lame horse and old buggy drove seventy miles with her daughter, taking the baby, too young to be left at home, and a son of eleven for help and

company on her return. All, at times, were crowded into the buggy, at times they took turns walking. They carried, besides, the girl's little box of clothes and food for themselves and horse. After two days rain fell and mud grew deep. The fourth day they arrived wet to the skin. What happiness they found in the warmth, dry clothing, food and welcome they received !

Another mother who could not boast even a lame horse set forth with Tildy and the family cow, which had been trained to carry a rider. They rode alternately, as they grew tired from walking, and stopped for wayside pasturage and to cook a scanty meal at a wayside fire. The milk of the cow furnished drink.

The slow trip of forty miles ended at last at the school which seemed to the forlorn pair too grand for them. There, however, the sixteen-year-old girl found home and training for four successful years, which meant successful Christian development to her, and, through her, uplift to those she had left in her mountain home.

Through such students the early rumors about the school grew into tidings of great joy. Sometimes young men from the Home Mission Schools established for boys, would teach in the highland schools and tell the story of the chance for girls. In ways like these new and noble desires have been kindled.

So far as able the girls pay tuition. Many toil for months to earn a few dollars for partial payment. Some are kept in school by societies at the North.

Can you imagine a girl setting forth to apply for membership in the first days of a new term ? She is dressed in calico or homespun. On her head is a sunbonnet. Other clothing than the garments she wears is in a small bundle tied at the four corners. In this bundle may be her shoes, too valuable, in her estimation, to be worn until she nears her destination, for the rough roads would not spare them through the miles she must walk. On and on she goes, weary, dusty, footsore. But her heart never fails. She knows what lies before her and her soul is glad. Her face is toward the new life opening to hundreds of mountain girls who have heard and responded to the tidings of great joy.



Girls who have "Had a Chance" in one of the
Home Missionary Schools.

Some Things Done.

SINCE Home Mission work for the Southern girls was begun, enough time has passed to show how largely, wherever His servants have planted and watered, God has given increase. Long ago the pioneer schools of few rooms and scanty furnishings were enlarged, improved or entirely replaced by new and modern buildings. They contain well-equipped schoolrooms, and the parlors, dining rooms and sleeping rooms are examples of homelike good taste. Kitchens, pantries and cellars are clean and pleasant. The grounds are well kept. The life of the girls is orderly, happy and elevating.

Some schools have steam heating plant and electric lights. Rugs are on the floors, pictures on the walls. All have good books for the young readers and some have excellent libraries.

These improvements have taken years of patient sacrifice, labor and wise management on the part of teachers and superintendents, supported by gifts and bequests of generous friends through the Woman's Home Missionary societies. The work has been unceasing, and many teachers who might occupy positions of prominence with large salaries have devoted their powers to this heavenly service.

Of course all schools are not large and thriving. New undertakings in needy places are always to be found, going through that day of small things which belongs to foundation work. But large or small, every school has momentous influence.

The first impression is upon the daily domestic life of the girls. Some are so dulled by their cramped, uninteresting lives that their mental training is better begun through household tasks than by means of books. The simplest utensils for housework are strange to them. One girl of fourteen the day after her entrance was sent to the kitchen for a broom and dust pan, that she might take her first sweeping lesson. She returned with a broom and milk pan ! She had never seen a dust pan.

Girls so ignorant would find only bewilderment in any teaching except the simplest. Yet most of them are not naturally stupid and soon become active and skillful about the house and in their studies.

Besides those who have no knowledge beyond that of the re-

mote cabin, there are some girls who live nearer towns, to which they go with some frequency, and who have attended the district school with some regularity. Their fathers, though not educated, are keen and shrewd, make a fair living and are able to pay the small expenses of the Mission Schools.

Then there are girls from the country parsonage, whose poorly paid fathers are unable to do much for the education of their children. Such girls find the Mission School a wonderful open door to the future.

One Mission School in its first eight years has sent out over five hundred girls who have learned their lessons of temporal and eternal life. More than five hundred homes will feel the upward impulse of those girls. Each carries some higher aspiration, some deeper insight, to her home associations.

A girl who entered a school at fifteen, tall, awkward, ignorant, returned on her first vacation to open a Sunday School in a half wrecked schoolhouse; the second year she added to that work the organization of a Girls' Home Mission band, with six members. In four years, owing to her efforts, preaching was regular at the schoolhouse during the summer and her father and two brothers were converted. "I have to thank God for that," she wrote, "for they were offle wicked." All the efforts of her teachers could not eradicate her use of the word "awful" nor teach her to spell it correctly. She had only ordinary intellect but was an earnest, practical, common sense girl, and marrying, later, she did a good woman's part in founding and sustaining a Christian home. In the region that has felt the Mission School influence, such homes are no longer rare.

The work already done for the classes of girls to whom the schools minister is strongly affecting home and social conditions. Those who have known the industrial and schoolroom training are doing themselves credit in many activities. It is declared by those best fitted to know that in no other branch of endeavor do the Woman's Home Mission societies get so large and prompt return for their labor.



A Mountain Grave.

Things to Do.

IN a Home for Southern girls is a superintendent, who for more than twenty years, through her loving Christian wisdom, has yearly enlarged the usefulness and power of her work until it would compare favorably with many regular boarding schools. Under her care hundreds have come to a high degree of Christian culture and efficiency. Towards her school eager girls turn in increasing numbers, and only a short time ago sixty-two were turned away for lack of room. Can you doubt that the heart of the superintendent ached in pity for the disappointment of the sixty-two?

There is constantly the cry, "There is not room enough for all who would come." Our rejoicing for the salvation of so many must not shut out the cry of the sixty-two. What a sad company they are, plodding wearily back to their homes with hope dying out of their young hearts.

So long as girls must be turned back additions must be made to old buildings, new schools must be built, more teachers must be employed. This all means that more money must be given.

A teacher in the South says that in an area about as large as one-third of a Southern mountain State more than one hundred thousand adults are unconverted and have no church influences; only thirty out of every hundred of school age are enrolled in the district schools and out of those enrolled fewer than thirty in a hundred attend regularly. Now when you recall the fact that the schools average less than six months' work in a year, you cannot wonder the people are ignorant. It is not their fault. They have been "shut in," and "for them the hands of the clock of civilization and Christianity have stood still."

To such a population the missionary goes with the Bible, necessary school books and the knowledge required for training girls to womanly arts and occupations. Her heart's first desire is to guide her young pupils to earnest, intelligent, Christian living, and with extraordinary fullness God gives her the desire of her heart. Yet always, from cabins more and more remote, she hears the call to do things. And overburdened as she is she does them

in larger numbers with sacrificing devotion.

The things she has done and the things she has to do, make her, though so quiet and inconspicuous, a force for America's future. The country's strength is in its homes, and the trained Highlanders of the South can make such homes, out of which will go noble men and women.

There are no foreign, un-American traits to overcome in the mountaineer. He has belonged to America for generations. His physical strength and endurance are remarkable. His brain has uncommon possibilities of attainment. He has some fine moral traits and is quick to respond to religious influences. Though enfeebled by the accidents of poverty and isolation in barren places, perhaps none are capable of greater things than he when once his inherent powers are developed.

It is plain that the restoration of the Highlanders to the rights of their inheritance as sons of honorable ancestors and as children of God, will add to the Christian civilization of our country fresh strength and ennoblement.



Dreams and no Dreams.

THERE is an innocent World of Dreams in which the young love to tarry and of which the old remember the charm. To it you have access and you may walk there with hope in a future when its dreams shall come true.

Not all have the same visions in that world for not all have the same longings. But the anticipations of each are toward something better than the present, and a thrill of rosy expectation lifts many young hearts to the courageous endeavor that brings success. If we carried realization there the enchantment would vanish, yet we may bring something of its enchantment to the land of realities and feel at our daily tasks a fresh inspiration.

Probably you have never thought what life would be if it were defrauded of its dreams. But many a young soul never wanders within the bounds of their magic. Can you imagine yourself in the place of a girl like that ?

Suppose your skies were so gray that you could not picture a roseate dawn nor a sunny day. Suppose you were so shut in by narrow circumstances that you had no hope of looking beyond them into wider, brighter places. Suppose your home were so unsightly and poverty-stricken that you were unfit to understand beauty of life or surroundings. Suppose you knew so little of the powers within you that you had never felt the stir of an ambition to try them. Suppose, like many a young girl, you had no dreams. Can you think of yourself in the place of a girl like that ?

You are glad of your better lot. Be thankful as well as glad. Do not, as you dream your dreams, forget the girls without dreams. Out of the riches God has given you send some share to the bare lives of those whose souls may be awakened to visions of higher things and to the achievements of eager effort.

